



THE Araignment & bur-

ning of *Margaret Ferne-seede*,
for the Murther of her late Husband

Anthony Ferne-seede, found deade in Peck-
ham Field neere Lambeth, hauing once be-
fore attempted to poyson him with broth,
being executed in S. Georges-field the
last of Februarie,

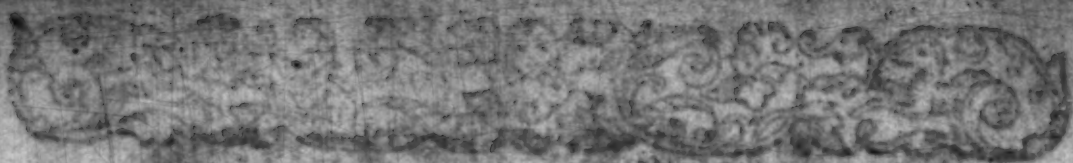
1608



LONDON

Printed for *Henry Gasson*, and are to be solde at the Signe
of the Sunne in Pater-noster-rowe.

1608



THE Arrangement & Dis-

Arrangement & Dis-
for the Marriage of her late husband
Mary Anne (née) Jones
being a memorial of the same
in the Court of Probate
at the City of London

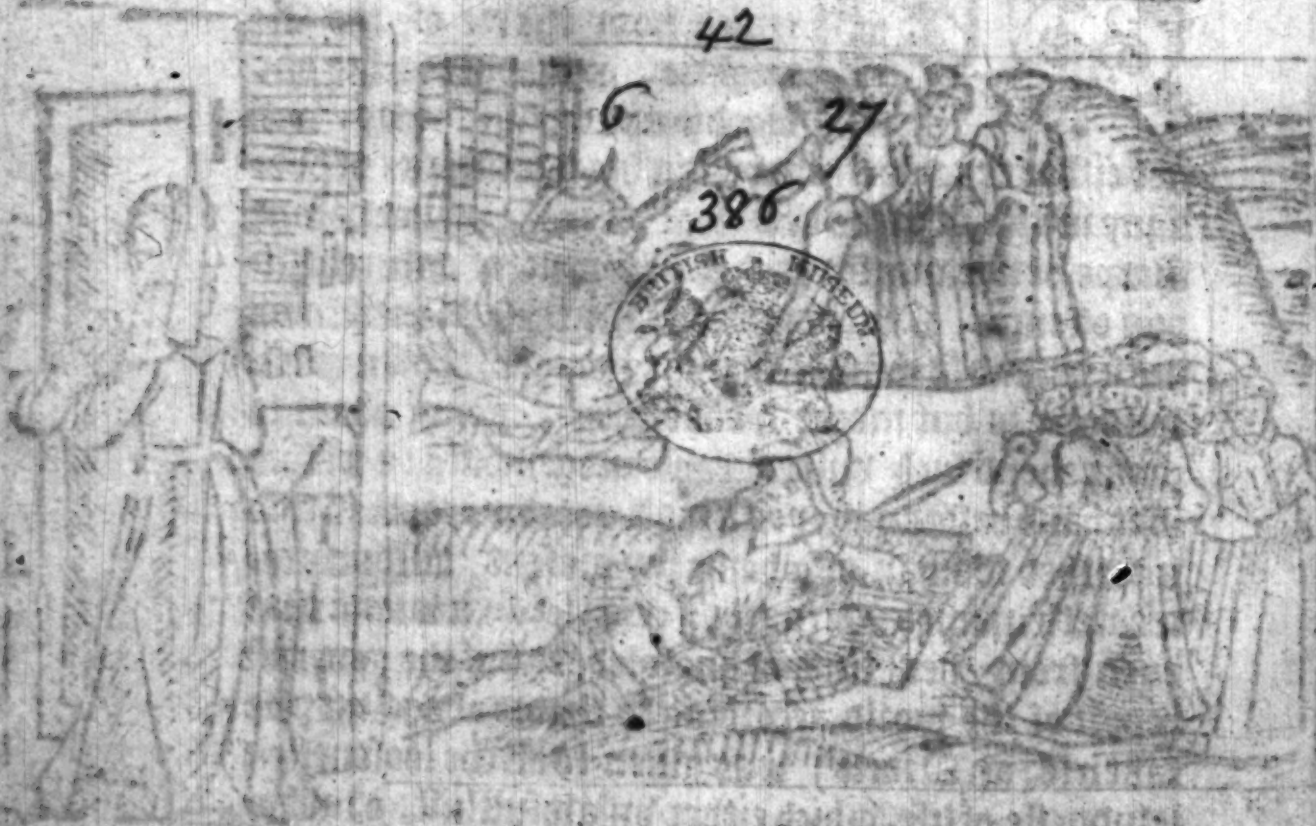
1808

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LONDON.

Printed by Henry Gifford and are to be sold at the Sign
of the Swan in Paternoster Row.



THE Burning of Margaret Ferne- seede.



He grosest part of
folly, and the most repugnant;
euen vnto our owne naturall
reason, is to thinke that our hid-
den abominations can be con-
cealed from the eie of the Al-
mightie, or that hee seeing our
bloodie and crying sinnes, will
not either reueale them befoze his Ministers of pub-
lique iustice, or in his best pleas'd time, pouer downe
sharpe vengeance for such presumptuous and rebell-
ous offences. Whilke miracles in these Reuelations
are such, and so infinite, that the thought of man or his
wisdome is but meere weakenesse, going about to
comprehend such vnspeakeable iudgements: & of this
wee haue befoze our eyes a most notable exāple in this
wretched woman, of whome my present discourse in-
treateth, named Margaret Ferne-seede, a woman that
euen from her time of knowledge (if the generall
report of the world, according to the old adage, may be
taken for an Oracle) was giuen to all the loosenesse &
lewdnesse of life, which either vnlawfull lust, or abhor-
minable prostitution could violently cast vpon her,

And thus shee continued in her wickednesse, till shee was
at length brought to the gallies, where shee was
burnt for her wickednesse.

The burning

With the greatest infamie, yea, and with such a publique and unrespectiue vnchastitie, that neither beeing chaste nor caute, she regarded not either into what eare the loathsomnesse of her life was sounded, or into what bed of lust her lasciuious bodie was transported: in this more then beestiall lasciuiousnes, hauing consumed the first part of her youth, finding both the corruption of her blood to check the former heate of her lust, and the too generall vglinesse of her prostitution, to breed a loath in her ordinarie customers, being then confirmed in some more strength of yeares, took a house neare vnto the Iron-gate of the Towler, where she kept a moste abhominable and vilde brothell house, popsoning many young women with that Anne wherewith her owne body long before was filthilie bebotched. From this house at the Iron-gate, she was married vnto one Anthony Ferne-seede a Taylor, dwelling in Ducke-lane, but keeping a shop vppon Adle-hill neare Carter-lane. This Anthony was amongst his neighbors, reputed to be both sober and of verie good conuersation.

Now it hapned that some few monthes agoe in the fieldes of Beckham neare London, there was found a man slaine hauing his throte cut, a knife in his hand, golde ringes vppon his fingars, and fortie shillings in money in his purse, his woundes of so long continuance that it was not onely corrupted, but there was also maggots, or such like filthie wormes ingendered therein, which gaue testimony to the beholders, that he had not slaine himselfe in that place, as well because the place was free from such a spectacle the day before, as also that such corruption could not proceede from a present slaughter. Againe, what the person slaine, no man knewe, both because his phisnomie was altered in his death, and because his acquaintance was little or none in those partes about Beckham: in the end, searching his pockets, and other parts of his apparail, amongst other notes and reckonings, they found an

Inden

of Margaret Ferne-seede.

Indenture wherein a certaine youth which did serue him was bound vnto him: this Indenture gaue them knowledge both of his name, and of the place of his dwelling, whereupon, certaine discrete persons of Beckham, sent to London to Dukes-lane, and inquiring for the house of one Anthony Ferne-seede, deliuered to his wife the disaster and mischance which had befallen her husband, which her hardned heart receiued, not as a message of sorrow, neither did she grudging of an afflicted countenance geue her remembrance, but as if it had bene the report of some ordinarie or vulgar newes, she embraced it with an inrespectiue neglect and carelesnes, & demanded instantly (before the message would tell her how he dyed) whether his throate were cut, or that he had cut his own throate, as either knowing or prophesying how he diide, yet to obserue a custome or fashion, or (as the prouerbe is) to carrie a candle before y^e deuill, she prepares herself & her seruant, in all haste to go to Beckham to behold her husband: & in y^e way as she went, it was her chance to meeete with one of her Husbands antient acquaintance, who feeling that in charitie which she ought to haue felt in nature, began to complaine her misfortune, telling her she had lost a most honest & good husband: she whome the deuill now would not suffer to dissemble, (though his greatest art be in dissimulation) told him her feare was, she should not heare so well of him: he wondering at her vngodly carelesnesse, let her passe, when presently she met another of her acquaintance, who with like charitie to the former, began to pittie her griefes, (though griefe was neuer further from her heart) and to wish her those comforts which are fit for affliction, but she as carelesse as before, gaue him (by the neglect of her words) true testimony how far sorrow was from her heart, which when he noted, he said, why mistris Ferne-seede, is y^e losse of a good husband:

husband so slightly to be regarded: for mine owne
 part, had such a mischance salne to my fortune, I
 shouldere this haue wept out mine eyes with
 true sorrow: but she quickly made him an-
 swere, for sir, mine eyes are ill alreadye and I
 must now preserue them to mend my cloa-
 thes not to mourne for a husband: after that,
 in her going, the winde blowing the dust in her face,
 she takes her skarffe & wiped her eyes, & said she should
 scarce know her husband when she saw him, these
 curtisan like speeches made her acquaintāce leaue her,
 & wished her more grace, so she & her boy came where
 the bodie was, where more for awe of the Magistrate
 then any terroz she felt, she made many sowet faces,
 but the drynesse of her braine would suffer no moisture
 to descend into her eyes: many questions were
 asked her, to which she answered with such constancie,
 that no suspicion could be grounded against her: then
 was her boy taken and examined, whod liuered the
 abhomination of her life, and that since her mariage
 with his maister, she had liued in all disquietnes, rage,
 and distemperature, often threating his life and con-
 triving plots for his destruction: that she had euer
 since her mariage, in most publique and notozious man-
 ner, maintained a yong man, with whom (in his bledw)
 she had often committed adultrie: that the same young
 mā since his maisters losse was fled he knew not whe-
 ther, and that his mistris had euen then before the mes-
 sage of his maisters death, sould all his goods (as
 he supposed) to fly also after him whom she loued: all
 these speeches were not only seconded, but almoste
 approued by some of her neighbors, which liued neare
 vnto her, insomuch that she was the second time taken
 into

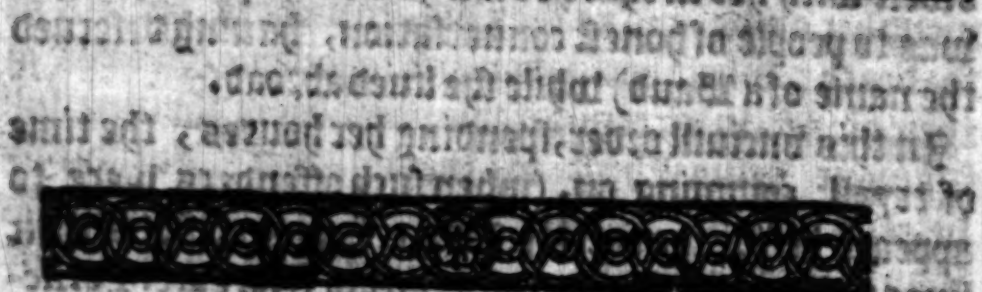
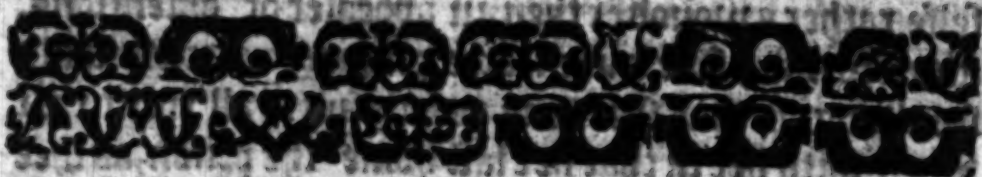
of Margaret Ferne-seede

into a more strict examination: wherein albeit she could not denie any of her generall assertions, yet touching the death of her husband, that she forswore & renounced the fact or practise thereof to be hers, with such a shameles constancie, that shee strooke amazement into all that heard her: in the end by authority of Justice she was committed to the white Lyon in Southwark: During the time of which imprisonment, till her time of tryall, thinking to out face truth with boldnesse, and sin with impudencie, she continued out all her examinations taken before severall Justices in her former denials, and whereas the Rod of imprisonment laid upon others, is received as a gentle correction, whereby to looke into themselves, it was to her rather the bellows of indignation then a temperer to patience: rather a kinde of frenzie, then a coole, of furie, & rather a prouoker to euill then a perswader to goodnesse, for she was seldome found to bee in charitie with any of her fellow prisoners, nor at any time in quiet with herselfe, rather a prouoker then an appeaser of dissensions, given to much swearing, scarce praying but continually scoulding, so that shee was as hateful to all them that dwelt with her in that her last home the prison, as shee was to people of honest conuersation, hauing deserved the name of a Baud) while she liued abroad,

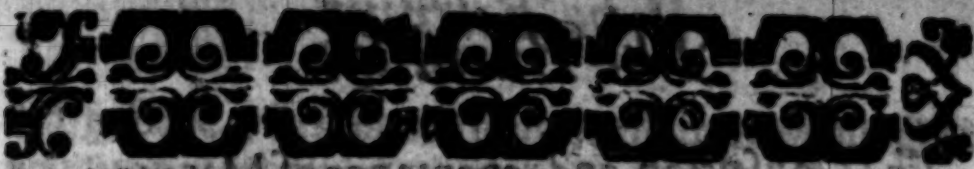
In this vniuill order, spending her houres, the time of tryall comming on, (when such offenders were to appeare before the earthly Judge, to giue account of their liues past) amongst many others, this Margaret Ferne-seede was one and at the assizes last, according to the order of law, she was indighted, & arraigned, the purpose of which inditement, was to haue practised the murder of her late husband Anthony Ferne-seede, who as before was found dead in Beckham field neere Lambeth:

to the iudgement she pleaded not guiltie: putting her
cause to God and the Countrie, which were a credible
Jurie paniled, and had there made their personall appea-
rance for that purpose: then were these severall witnes-
ses produced against her, namely of the incontinentnes
of her life past, her attempt to poyson her husband before
this murder, as also to prepare broth for him, and put
powder in it, her slight regard of him in his life, and
her carelesse sorrow for him after death: with other cir-
cumstances, as the flight of the fellowe to whom she had
lived long in adulterie with all, her present sale of her
goods vpon her husbands murder, as it may be iustly
thought, with purpose to die after him: on which lawfull
evidence, she was counted, & after iudgement given her
to be burned: and from thence she was conueyed backe
to the White Lyon, till the time appointed for her ex-
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How



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How Margaret Ferne-seede spent her time
in prison, from Satterday, the day of her con-
uiction, till Munday the last of Febru-
arie, when in S. Georges fieldes she
was executed.

BEing come backe to the prison: for the first night
she disposed her selfe according to her ancient habit,
being as it were so rooted, and accustommed to euil, that an
euen death it selfe had not power to make her forget
it, and endenour a better course: but being at the same
time in the prison with her, three Gentlemen who like-
wise were condemned, and who, through the course of
their liues had not taught them to liue well: yet the
care of theirs soules remembred them to dye well these
Gentlemen hauing heard how ill her life past had
bene, and that her countenance was as resolute, im-
postuned the keeper that they might haue her company,
partly to instruct her, but especially y she might see them,
& by the reformation of their liues she might learne to a-
mend her owne: and as they did, to prepare her selfe fit
for death: whose persuation and wholsome counsells of
their owne, with comfortable promises of our meritisfull
Saviour Iesus Christ to them that vnfeinedly
beleue in him, and by vnfeined repentance make
way to their saluation, as also with threatening her
with the terrible Iudgements of Hell which are pre-
pared for them that perish through lacke of grace: they
so wrought in her, she was at last dradone to make a con-
fession of her former life past, and to repent her of the
same. The forme of which was in this manner.

The Burning.

The Confession and repentance of Margaret
Ferneſeed, after her condemnation in
the White Lyon.

TO prepare the reader for this confession of hers,
I know that I was credibly ſatisfied, that when
the heat of her fury was paſt, to which ſhe was much
ſubiect vnto) ſhe a woman wel ſpoken, offaice deliuerace,
and good perſuaſion: and ſo to her confeſſion.

To excuſe my ſelfe O Lord before thee, who
knowes the conſpiracies of our thoughtes euen to the
vtmoſt of our actions, (how euer ſo priuat or publikey
committed,) were folly; or to iuſtifie my ſelfe were
ſinne, ſince no fleſh can appeare pure in thy ſight: I
here therfore, with proſtrate knees, & deſected eyes, as
vntwoorthie to looke vp vnto thy diuine Maieſtie,
with a contrite hearte and penitent ſoule, alſo here
voluntariely confelle, I am the greateſt of ſinners,
which haue deſerued thy wrath and indignation: In
this good manner ſhe proceeded, and withall ſatisfied
all that came, & deſired to haue priuate conference with
her, of the whole courſe of her life, that in her youth,
euen from the age of aptneſſe, ſhe had bene a prostitute,
whore but growing into deſabled yeares, to pleaſe the
loole deſires of ſuch customers, ſhe after turned
bande, a courſe of life more hatefull in tempting and
ſeducing youth, then the other in committing ſinne:
the one makes but ſpoile and ruyne of her ſelfe, and
the other of a multitude, ſo (quoth ſhee) I my ſelfe
haue had ten ſenerall women retaining to my houſe
for that purpoſe: ſome were mens wiues, which re-
paired thither both by appointinent, and at conuenient
houres, when their husbands might leaſt ſuſpect or
haue knowledge of their abſence: and theſe women did

I ſitt

of Margaret Fenne-seede.

I first tempte to their fall, some, by perswading them they were not beloued of their husbands, especially if I could at any time haue note of any breach or discontent betweene them: others, that their husbands maintained them not sufficiently to expresse their beauty, and according to their owne defects: of these, the hauing brought my purpose to effect, & that I knew they had offended, I made this booty that they were as fearefull to offend me, as their husbands should haue knowledge of their offences: and these allowed mee a weekly pention for comming to my house, and durst not at all times but finde opportunitie to come whensoever my selfe or such loose friendes, whome either they had bene familiar withall, or now desired to be acquainted with them, should send for any of them, to supply my house, and make spoile of yong maides who were sent out of the countrie by their friends, here with hope to aduance themselves: I went weekly to the Carriers, where if the maide liked mee, I so wrought with the Carrier that he should leaue me till I had brought her to be as bad as I purposed, which effected, euery one of them I compelled to giue mee ten shillings a week out of their gottings: hauing as I said shold leaue then ten whose bodies and soules I kept in this bondage: Besides I confesse I was a continuall receiuer of theft & stolen but in all this, as it was badly got, so was it worse consumed for nothing of it did prosper with me, whereby (quoth she) I acknowledge I haue deserued death, and in the highest degree, but for this which I am condemned, Heauen that knoweth best the secrets of our hearts, knowes I am innocent.

But who knowes not that in euill, there is a like impudence to deny, as there is a forwardnesse to adoe: in

which we will leave here whom the law hath found guilty, and having thus truly related her owne confession, wee proceed to the manner of execution.

First onely touching the evidence of two Sailers, given to the Iurie at her arraignment: Among other circumstances that was availablest to condemne her, this was one and the chiefeſt: during the time while she kept a bad house about the Iron-gate: by Tower-ditch, there hapned a couple of Barge-men to come to reuell at her house with such Gueſtes as she kept to entertaine loose customers, and having spent the whole day in large ryot and much expence, & night being late, for that time they made their lodging there, they beeing a bed, it hapned that night (which was ſeldome) her husband came to make his lodging there also, and being chambered with his wife, but a wall betweene where these Barge-men lay, they could expreſſie heare them euerie word that passed betweene them, the effect of which was, the reprimonding of her for her bad life, his perswading her to amendment, which she not willing to liſten unto fell a ſcolding at him, and so left both his bed and chamber ſome time paſſing.

At laſt Maſter Ferneſeede heard these Barge-men rough, & wondering to haue ſtrangers lodged in his house (for it was not common to his knowledge) aroſe out of his bed, and demanded of them what they were: who asked of him also wherefore hee questioned them: Mary (quoth hee) for if you be honneſt men, and haue a care either of your bodies or ſoules, aboide this house as you would doe poiſon, leaſt it be the vndoing of you all, they ſeeing him of a comely perſonage: and that his wordes tended to ſome purpoſe, demanded of him what he was that gaue them ſuch whole ſome counſell: I am (quoth he) the maſter of this house

(if

of Margaret Ferne-seede.

(if I had my right) but I am hard of the possession and commande thereof, by a deuillish woman, who makes a shewes of it to exercise her sinnefull practises: so with some other admonishment left the roome, when these Barge-men tolde mistris Ferneseed what they had heard of her husband, to which she replied: hāg him name and villaine: I will before God bee reuenged of him (may ere long) by one meanes or other, so worke, that I will bee rid of him, which making good in the iudgement of the Judge, to gather with her life & practises, she as aforesaid was condemned.

On Monday being the last of February, she had notice giuen her, that in the after-noon she must suffer death, and a Preacher commended vnto her to instruct her for her soules health, who laboured much with her for the confession of the fact, which she still obstinately denied, but made great shewe of repentance for her life past, so that about two of the clocke in the after-noon she was stripped of her ordinary wearing apparell, and vpon her owne smocke put a kirtle of Canuasse pitched cleane thzough, ouer which she did weare a white sheet, and so was by the keeper deliuered to the Shreue, one each hand a woman leading her, and the Preacher going before her. Being come to the place of execution, both before and after her fastning to the Stake, with godly exhortations hee admonished her that now in that minute she would confesse that fact for which she was now ready to suffer, which she denying, the reeds were planted aboute, vnto which fier being giuen she was presently dead.

FINIS.